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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [SNAR](#) [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PU](#) [PO](#)
SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE MOJ GOALS ON GUINEA-BISSAU, A CRY FOR
HELP

Classified By: POL CHIEF TROY FITRELL, REASONS 1.4 (B,D)

¶1. (C) Summary. The Portuguese MOJ recommends three immediate projects to aid rule of law efforts in Guinea-Bissau. Recognizing the difficulty of operating with the host government and frustrated with the pace of decision-making in the U.N., MOJ officials asked us to share the MOJ's views with interested parties within the USG. In short, the MOJ recommends a new prison, a renovated judicial police building, and a linked civil register, national identification card, and criminal records database. End summary.

¶2. (C) Portuguese Ministry of Justice Director of International Programs Miguel Romao briefed us on his opinions regarding rule of law efforts in Guinea-Bissau. Romao said Portugal was extremely frustrated with U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) efforts, suggesting that UNODC concentrates on its own infrastructure and not on helping the Government of Guinea-Bissau.

¶3. (C) Romao also expressed frustration with the limitations)- primarily financial)- on the efforts of his own office. For this reason, he shared with us the top three projects he wished to see occur. While openly asking for U.S. trilateral cooperation to fund these projects, Romao also requested U.S. support in discussions within the U.N. and other fora.

¶4. (C) Romao spoke highly of the Guinea-Bissau Minister of Justice Carmelita Rodrigues Pires, but noted that upcoming elections in Guinea-Bissau might see the end of her tenure due to rivalries with more powerful ministers. Romao added that he himself had submitted his resignation to the Portuguese Ministry of Justice in order to return to his University of Lisbon Law School professorship (where Rodrigues Pires had been a student). He hoped that the three projects described below would gain traction regardless of who was involved in the project on the Lisbon or Bissau side.

¶5. (C) First, Romao advocated the construction of a prison. With no facility to incarcerate prisoners, Romao felt it useless to continue training police, prosecutors, and judges. The construction of a prison was highlighted in the UNODC action plan for Guinea-Bissau presented at a Lisbon pledging conference on December 12, 2007, but no donor or actor has picked up the project. Romao said the Portuguese MOJ was ready to conduct training for prison administrators and guards, including using Portugal's prison guard training center and having the Guinean guards intern in Portugal's prisons, as well as deploying Portuguese guards to Guinea-Bissau as they have in Timor Leste. UNODC estimates this construction project at 2.5 million euros.

¶6. (C) Second, and similar to the first, Romao advocated the renovation of the Judicial Police (PJ) building in Bissau. He said the Government of Guinea-Bissau (GOGB) had rented a

building for the PJ but that it was not yet fit for occupancy. Among the Government of Portugal (GOP) rule of law officials in Bissau, there is a Portuguese PJ official integrated in the Guinea-Bissau PJ as an advisor. The GOP estimates this renovation project at 250,000 euros.

¶7. (C) Third, Romao advocated the development of a Civil Register alongside a national identification card. The existing national identification card was provided on a for-profit basis by a Belgian company and was not tied to any civil register. Romao said Minister Rodrigues Pires cancelled the contract with the Belgian company as each card cost the equivalent of three weeks salary for the average citizen. Romao suggested that if a new civil register Q implemented, a criminal records database could be attached to it, as could voter registration efforts. The GOP estimates the development, installation, implementation, and training involved with a linked civil register, identification card, and criminal records database would be 3 million euros.

Comment

¶8. (C) While we are skeptical about the idea of spending any money on the GOBG under current circumstances, we stand ready to work here in Lisbon to advance any of these projects should other addressees be interested in supporting them.
Ballard